



***Council/Committee/Task Force
Report Form/Board Recommendation***

Committee Name:	Early Career	Quarter/Year:	Year end 2025
Prepared by:	Dr. Jesse Tyma	Date Submitted:	11/17/2025

Chair – Dr. Jesse Tyma

Board Liaison – Dr. Ty Corbiell

Staff Liaison – Nick Altwies and Shelby Mosley

Committee Charge:

To develop resources and create networking opportunities for AAEP members early in their careers, including internship and mentorship opportunities; and to actively engage recent graduates to elicit discussion and gather feedback for the AAEP to better support the early career veterinarian.

This Committee is:

- ☒ Reporting with no action
☐ Recommending board action or a policy change (add information below)

Summary of Activities/Issues/Decisions/Accomplishments:

The Early Career Committee (ECC) was implemented in December 2024 with strong carryover from the Sustainability Initiative’s Internship Subcommittee, the addition of several new enthusiastic members, and committed staff support and guidance. Over the past year, the committee has strived to operate within its charge in all endeavors. Committee activities include the following:

1. Monthly Meetings:

The ECC held monthly meetings (skipping one month due to scheduling conflict) to brainstorm projects, develop working groups, and collaboratively build content for the early career community. With attendance consistently over 75%, members brought positive energy and excellent ideas to a constructive and dynamic atmosphere.

2. Mission Statement:

The ECC developed a mission statement to reflect the values guiding our work: “To

empower early career equine veterinarians by fostering collaborative community, promoting accessible and responsible mentorship, and developing forward-thinking strategies that support well-being, fulfillment, and long-term career sustainability.”

3. Internship Hub Development:

The ECC continued the Internship Subcommittee’s work on the Internship Hub. What began as requests for discrete edits for the 2025 application cycle evolved into broader discussions regarding long-term usability. AAEP staff diligently supported practices in editing their listings (a feature not built into the platform). It became clear that a redesigned wireframe is needed to support future goals—including an internship applicant portal and a mechanism for intern feedback. Two ECC members continue to collaborate with AAEP and Yoko staff. Based on the most recent meeting, Yoko anticipates having version “2.0” ready for review by early March 2026, positioning it for launch ahead of the 2026 application cycle.

4. Early Career Facebook Community:

The ECC created a private AAEP Early Career Community Facebook group to replace an inactive predecessor, with the goal of providing a psychologically safe, supportive space for early career equine veterinarians (within their first 10 years of practice). Several ECC members serve as moderators, and all committee members participate. Membership stands at 330 as of this report. Engagement has been low, consisting primarily of staff announcements, some committee posts, and infrequent posts from non-committee members. To increase engagement, the ECC plans to implement twice-weekly scheduled posts (e.g., “win Wednesday,” “support Sunday”) and assign each committee member one monthly posting responsibility.

5. Early Career Survey:

The ECC conducted a survey of AAEP-member early career equine veterinarians (within 10 years of practice) to assess perceptions of practice and AAEP programming and to guide committee priorities. The survey received 446 responses, considered a strong rate. The largely qualitative 22-question survey yielded extensive feedback; key takeaways include:

- o Early career veterinarians remain in jobs for an average of 1.98 years.
- o Direct mentorship was identified as the most important tool supporting career longevity.
- o Two-thirds of respondents feel the climate of equine practice has improved in response to sustainability initiatives.
- o Internships and early jobs remain critical inflection points—ranging from empowering to unsupportive or exploitative.
- o Career longevity appears highly dependent on practice culture, work-life structure, and mentorship.

- o Significant challenges persist in recruitment and retention, work-life balance, compensation, client expectations, mentorship quality, physical and emotional toll, and overall industry perception.
- o Awareness and engagement with AAEP programs outside continuing education remain limited, including with the Early Career Practitioner's Reception, Outrider Mentee Program, Decade One Stipend, and Member Assistance Program.
- o *Survey results have been consolidated into social media—appropriate snippets for marketing to publish in early 2026.

6. August 27 Wednesday Night Roundtable:

The ECC hosted *Early Career Connections: Building a Sustainable Path Together* to introduce the committee, share its charge and mission, discuss early projects, present survey results, and solicit community needs. Eight members participated as panelists. Virtual attendance was modest (30–40 attendees), with some engaged discussion aligned with survey themes.

7. September 24 Wednesday Night Roundtable:

In collaboration with the Performance Horse and Professional Conduct and Ethics Committees, the ECC led *Practical Performance Horse Ethics: Guiding the Next Generation*. Three ECC members served as panelists and one as moderator. The program addressed ethically challenging, high-pressure, and morally ambiguous situations in the performance horse industry, presented via scenario-based discussion. Attendance was modest (~30 attendees). This served as a precursor to the similar-format Convention Ethics talk.

8. ECC Leadership Meeting:

The ECC leadership triad (/rhombus with two staff liaisons) met at the end of July and November to discuss progress, challenges, and strategic focus for the remainder of the year.

9. EVE Article:

The ECC authored a brief *Equine Veterinary Education* article summarizing survey data and findings, expected to be published in the December 2025 edition.

[Final draft linked here](#)

10. Resources Document:

The ECC developed a Resources Document organized into podcasts, books, clinical, and non-clinical professional resources. Each category includes materials related to business, finance, leadership, health and wellness, and clinical how-to guides. This will be published on a dedicated Early Career Committee webspace, with the long-term goal of allowing reader-submitted resource suggestions.

[Final draft linked here](#)

11. Best Practices for Employment Document:

The ECC created *“Best Practices for Employment in Equine Practice: A Priorities*

Assessment for Early Career Veterinarians Applying for Associate Positions.” This is intended to foster sustainability for new employees by supporting discussion and goal-setting during employment negotiations. Recommendations focus on compensation, culture, mentorship, and warning signs, with references and links to additional resources. This will also be published on the Early Career Committee webspace.

[Final draft linked here](#)

12. Values-Based Assessment Initiative:

Discussion arising from the “best practices” project led to development of an early career-focused Values-Based Assessment to help veterinarians identify workplace values and use them to support career satisfaction or transitions. The working group has two goals for 2026:

- o a self-assessment worksheet, and
- o a virtual professional program (likely a Wednesday Night Roundtable) featuring an expert in values work.

13. Executive Board Interviews for Social Media:

The ECC will organize interviews with the executive board during the 2026 Convention to generate accessible, high-value social media content for the Early Career Community Facebook page and other future AAEP platforms. This initiative aims to strengthen connections between early career members and AAEP leadership.

14. Convention How-to Guide:

The ECC created a “*Convention How-to Guide*” to provide pragmatic guidance for early career veterinarians and first-time attendees. This concise resource will be emailed to registrants within their first 10 years of practice, added to the AAEP Convention app, and provided as a printed handout at registration.

[Document linked here](#)

15. Convention Ethics Talk Collaboration:

Two ECC members will participate as panelists in the Professional Conduct and Ethics Committee’s Convention Ethics talk *Practical Performance Horse Ethics: Guiding the Next Generation*, echoing the September roundtable format. This session is a joint effort among the ECC, Professional Conduct and Ethics Committee, and Performance Horse Committee.

16. Mane Event Discussion:

Two ECC members will lead an informal discussion at the Convention “Mane Event” titled *Survey Says: What Matters Most to Early Career Veterinarians*, reviewing survey results and gathering perspectives and ideas from attendees.

17. Career Transition Support (Ongoing Concept):

An ongoing but undeveloped idea is how to better support early career veterinarians during professional transitions—from new graduate to practitioner, internship to

practice, associate to owner, launching a new business, or transitioning between private practice and academia. This has been repeatedly identified as a pain point, but resources have not yet been expanded to address it.

18. Mentorship Development (2026 Priority):

The ECC has spent significant time discussing how to facilitate meaningful mentorship for early career veterinarians, identified as the major priority heading into 2026. An internal committee survey was conducted to help focus ideas. Committee members acknowledge the modest engagement within the Outrider program and the potential gap created by transitioning the Decade One program to larger cohorts. Survey respondents envision a modernized, flexible mentorship ecosystem—rebranded for clarity, opt-in by design, and supported by multiple tiers (from micro-mentorship to long-term structures). Success will depend on mentor engagement, structured facilitation, and clear categorization to connect early-career members with relevant guidance. One proposed initiative is to use the 2026 Convention to educate selected mentors on roles, responsibilities, and communication skills, and to educate early career mentees on receiving and processing feedback. These modules would lead into facilitated one-on-one “meet your mentor” events and ongoing virtual small-group meetings. Additional ideas include highlighting effective in-practice mentorship programs (e.g., at Littleton Equine and Rhinebeck Equine), identifying technical-skill experts willing to support early career skill development, and creating a dedicated resource and literature library to support self-directed mentorship and learning.

Board Engagement

As the ECC looks ahead to 2026, we ask for the Board of Directors’ guidance in shaping the mentorship initiatives outlined above, particularly in determining the scope, structure, and long-term feasibility of a modernized mentorship ecosystem. We believe it is realistic to incorporate foundational elements of this effort into the next year’s Convention—specifically, offering mentor and mentee training modules focused on roles, expectations, communication skills, and feedback processing; facilitating structured introductory opportunities such as one-on-one “meet your mentor” events or small-group connection sessions; and launching clear branding and messaging around a refreshed mentorship framework. These convention-based components would serve as the formal kickoff to a broader, longitudinal mentorship program that can be expanded after initial Board input and evaluation. Beyond mentorship, we seek direction on prioritizing our additional initiatives—including continued development of the Internship Hub, expansion of early career resources, dissemination of survey findings, and strengthening of community engagement—to ensure we remain aligned with AAEP strategic goals and use our committee’s bandwidth effectively. The Board’s guidance on which endeavors should be elevated, which should be phased, and what metrics of success should be emphasized will be central to our progress in the coming year.

The agenda for Denver will consist of recap and planning for next year.

Recommendation for board action: (state in the form of a motion and provide any background or supporting documentation you feel is appropriate):

No recommendations or actions for the board.